

to-day are commercially and politically the most influential community in the United States. On every occasion when there has been any proposition to interrupt the friendly relations between Canada and the United States, we have found the merchant classes of Boston and the New England States awake to the fact that nothing could be more injurious to them than an interruption of these privileges. Then we know that over the Canada Southern Railway which is now under the control of the Michigan Central an enormous traffic is carried which enables us to measure the tremendous advantages the people of the United States enjoy under the bonding privilege, and the great benefit to the merchants of Boston and the New England cities of being able to have their freight hauled over that air line. All these things being considered, it struck me that there was not very great danger of the interruption of the bonding privilege. But still it was only becoming that I should keep in mind the fact that there might be reasons known to the right hon. gentleman (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) which were not known to me or to the House. Owing to his position as leader of the government of Canada he is in immediate and close communication with the home government and must know of matters affecting the foreign office, matters that are of importance in connection with the relations between the people of the United States and Canada. Perhaps at the very moment the right hon. gentleman was speaking he may have had knowledge which led him to believe that in the Alaska boundary question, which was not then settled, there were matters which might set up unfriendly feeling and lead to the repeal of the bonding privilege. If that were so—and I was not disposed to shut my eyes to the fact that these conditions might exist—strong as were the reasons that induced me a year ago to think there was no danger of the interruption of the bonding privilege, by so much stronger are they to-day when I remember that the only source of possible trouble between the governments has been removed. Consequently it seems to me the right hon. gentleman himself in view of the fact that another year has passed without any sign of the people of the United States wishing to abandon the bonding privilege must see that his argument of the urgency of this matter is not one which should influence the members of this House or of the country. The hon. gentleman laid stress last year upon the want of railway facilities in the west, and he stated the people of the west were injured and hampered in their business, subjected to inconvenience, and he supposed to a certain measure of loss, on account of insufficient railway connection. Having visited the west and having obtained all the information I could from members from that country who can speak with adequate information, it appears to me that there is no

Mr. BELL.

immediate necessity for the construction of another line of road. We know that during the two years preceding the introduction of this measure by the hon. gentleman in 1903, there had been a great many complaints from the west as to the inadequate facilities for moving goods into the west and more particularly for the carriage of grain from the west eastward. While that was true for the two years preceding the introduction of this measure, it would seem that the inconvenience which existed in the west was not caused by the need of more miles of railway, but by the want of rolling stock on the existing lines. I am not going to say at all that there are not many hundreds of men, possibly some thousands, who are further from a railway line than they would like to be, but these men would be served not so much by the construction of another trunk line as by the extension of branch lines now in existence or proposed. I believed then and I believe now that with sufficient rolling stock upon these lines all the crops could be handled not only this year but for some years to come. The result of this last year has gone to show that this opinion was correct. There has been no complaint during the past year of difficulty in moving the crop as rapidly as it should be removed.

Mr. McCREARY. It was a very light crop.

Mr. BELL. My hon. friend (Mr. McCreary) reminds me of a very cogent argument; it has been a comparatively light crop. I would imagine that in proposing to spend the \$175,000,000 the right hon. gentleman should have in mind the fact that it was possible you might have light crops, that it was not necessary to provide for a bumper crop every year. The fact of the matter was that the years preceding the introduction of this measure were exceptional, that the yield of grain was enormously large. These years in which some people might imagine that necessity existed for further railway communication were years of exception and plenty, years in which the crops were at least fifty per cent in excess of the average, and therefore it was not safe or prudent or wise to argue that because in years of enormous and overflowing plenty the railways could not handle the traffic of the country, we should at once proceed to expend a sufficient amount of money to equip the country with sufficient railways capable of handling all its enormous crops in bumper years. But there are other reasons. As long as the country was new, as long as the men going in had to recoup themselves for their expenditure and reimburse those from whom they had procured supplies, the chances were they would want to make immediate sales of their crops. It would be the policy of almost every farmer to turn his crop into cash at once. But with the growth of well-being in that western